

(c) whether Government have decided to privatise this Corporation and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) Sir, the post of Managing Director and Part-time Chairman, State Farms Corporation of India (SFCI) fell vacant on 7.5.1999 and 15.7.1999 respectively. Pending filling up the two posts by the Public Enterprises Selection Board on regular basis, additional charge of the posts has been assigned to Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture. In the case of Managing Director, the selection process is complete and the offer of appointment has been issued to the selected candidate.

(b) SFCI farms are normally headed by Directors. Out of 12 farms, 6 farms are presently headed by Directors. The other farms were also hitherto looked after by Directors, but, subsequent to the posts falling vacant, charge has been given to the senior most officer of the concerned farm. Due to condition of financial stress in the Corporation, filling up of vacant post of Directors has been temporarily suspended.

(c) No. Sir.

Barren Land in the Country

†3265. **SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total area of barren land in hectare in the country;

(b) whether Government are taking any effective steps to transform the sterile/barren land into cultivable;

(c) if so, details thereof; and

(d) if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (d) As per the report of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, there is about 19.0 m.ha. which has been classified as barren land in the country. Barren land includes exposed steep mountain slopes, snow covered and such other areas etc., which can not be brought under cultivation at an economic cost. Hence, there is no programme in the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation to convert such barren land into cultivable land.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.